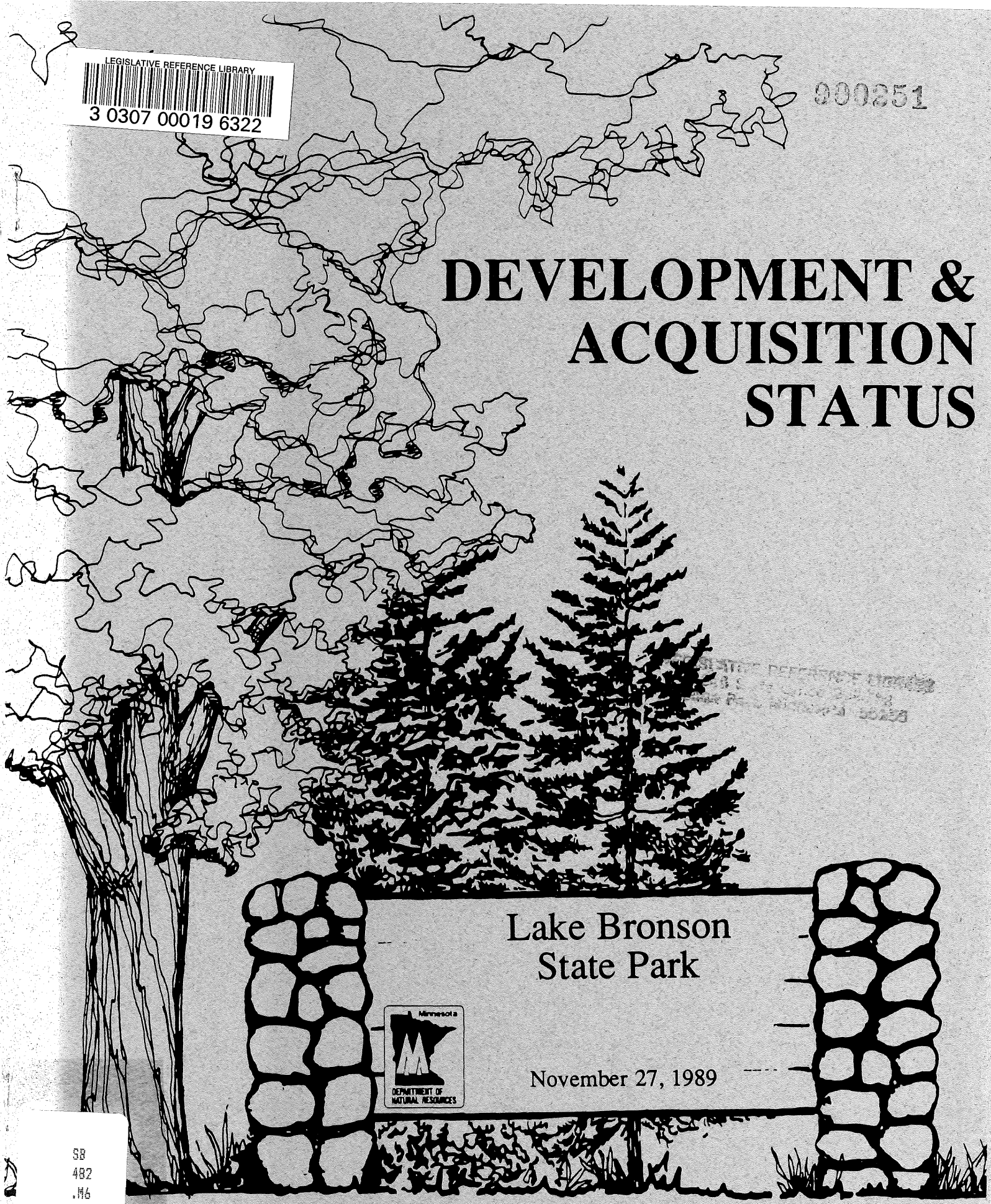
DEVELOPMENT & ACQUISITION STATUS



Lake Bronson State Park

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

November 27, 1989

MINNESOTA STATE PARK SYSTEM

The mission of the Division of Parks and Recreation is to provide a state park system that perpetuates Minnesota's scenic beauty and its natural and cultural resources, while being responsive to public needs and expectations, and providing a diversity of recreational opportunities.

The Division of Parks and Recreation manages 64 state parks across Minnesota. The state park system is vital to Minnesota's tourism, an industry that is becoming the backbone of many economies in greater Minnesota. Our most unique and valuable cultural and natural resources are found within state park boundaries. It is the Division of Parks & Recreation's responsibility to acquire, protect and interpret these unique resources.

Prior to the 1989 legislative session, funding constraints and increasing visitor use seriously eroded the Division of Parks and Recreation's ability to provide quality recreational experiences and services. Since then the Governor and state legislators have responded to the need for increased funding for the operations budget. However, financing the maintenance of existing facilities and new development in the face of increasing visitor use remains a problem. This will be addressed during the 1990 legislative session when a capital bonding bill is considered.

The state park system has the Department of Natural Resource's (DNR) largest physical plant with over 2,800 major facilities requiring major rehabilitation. The Division of Parks & Recreation has identified more than $55 million in capital budget needs. These projects include land acquisition, resource management, major rehabilitation or replacement of existing facilities and a few new facilities. Legislative funding requests to meet this need will be spread throughout future bienniums.

A recent study conducted by the Minnesota Historical Society identifies 515 historic structures located in the state park system. These structures are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Most of these structures are of Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and Work Progress Administration (WPA) vintage. The CCC/WPA structures were constructed in the 1930's. These facilities are over 50 years old and many are in need of major rehabilitation which includes the electrical, sewage, and water systems associated with these buildings.

Many years of intensive use is also a consideration when looking at the current condition of campgrounds, picnic areas, group camps and trail systems. Lack of development and rehabilitation of these and other state park facilities will reduce park use. A reduction in state park use will adversely impact the economic development of adjacent communities and Minnesota's effort to improve tourism.

As capital development funds have become available we have completed the highest priority projects. As additional needs are identified, they are reviewed and placed on the statewide priority list for future completion.

In 1991, Itasca, Minnesota's oldest state park , will be 100 years old. For 100 years Minnesota has had a park system to be proud of. The present challenge is to manage the park resources and recreational development to ensure that Minnesotan's will be proud of their state park system for another hundred years.

AN OVERVIEW OF LAKE BRONSON STATE PARK

Lake Bronson State Park is located on the edge of the Red River Valley in Kittson County, 17 miles northwest of Karlstad on the south branch of Two Rivers. Kittson County State Aid Highway #28 from Lake Bronson provides major access to the park.

The statutory boundary encloses approximately 2,983 acres. Of these approximately 549 acres are in private ownership.

The landscape of Lake Bronson State Park was formed primarily by the forces of Glacial Lake Agassiz and secondarily by wind deposits "Dunes". Wave action and deposition of sand and silt in the lake basin created essentially flat topography, devoid of natural lakes. The general flatness of the terrain is interrupted by gravel ridges, or beach lines. The last stage of Lake Agassiz left the McCauleyville Beach, which passes through Lake Bronson State Park.

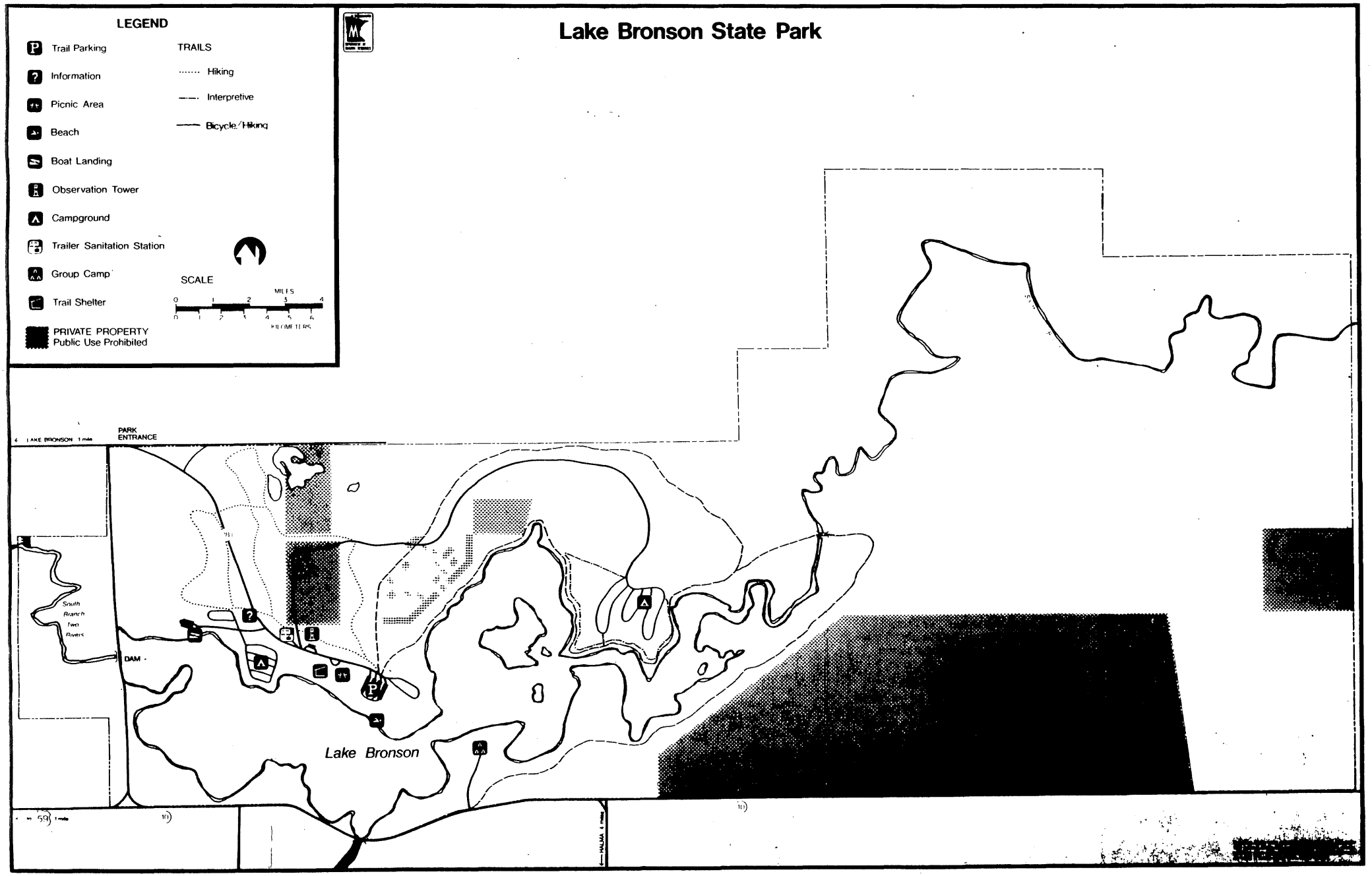
Streams draining the region may have eroded notches in this beach line which overtime migrated upstream. Such is the case with the south branch of Two Rivers at Lake Bronson State Park where a forty foot dam, built in the approximate location of the eroded notch, has flooded the stream channel to form Lake Bronson.

in 1937, Clifford Bouvette was elected to the state legislature and introduced a bill to transfer the responsibility of maintaining the demand adjacent park from the county to the state by designating it a state park. The dam and park buildings had previously been constructed under the Works Progress Administration (WPA).

Lake Bronson has attracted substantial numbers of swimmers, anglers, and related users largely from within a 100 mile radius, with a large segment coming from Winnipeg. Local Red Cross swimming and lifeguard programs are conducted here and area schools are making increasing use of the park for environmental education.

The town of Lake Bronson depends upon the economic activity generated by the park. Continuing community pride has resulted in a strong involvement by the local park advisory committee to make Lake Bronson State Park a viable recreational resource for the area.

Lake Bronson State Park



EXISTING FACILITIES

The following is an inventory of the existing physical plant of Lake Bronson State Park.

Acres in Statutory Boundary - 2,983
Acres of state land - 2,434

Campsites
- Drive in - 194
- Showers - Yes
- Modern toilets - Yes
- Campsites with electricity - 15

Miles of Trails
- Self-guided Interpretive - 1
- Hiking - 14
- Bicycle - 5
- Cross Country Ski - 5

Playgrounds - 1
Beaches - 1
Boat & Canoe Rental
Miles of Road
- Asphalt - 3
- Gravel - 4

Enclosed Picnic Shelter
Number of Picnic Tables - 110
Trailer Dump Station - 1
Water Accesses - 1
Fishing Piers - 1

Number of Buildings
- Over 100 sq.ft. - 11
- Under 100 sq.ft. - 23

Miles of Posted Boundary - 14

Park Utilities
- Sewage Lagoon - 1
- Number of Sewage Lift Stations - 1
- Number of Septic Tanks - 7
- Number of Wells - 4
- Number of Individual Water Distribution Systems - 4
- Miles of State Owned Power Line - .6

PROBLEMS FACING LAKE BRONSON STATE PARK

There are many public recreational facilities in Lake Bronson State Park to maintain. Many are in need of replacement or major rehabilitation. Most were constructed in the 1960's, and are now in need of rehabilitation. Many new facilities are needed to meet growing recreational demands.

The park's natural and cultural resources are also in need of protection and management to perpetuate Lake Bronson's resources. In the past, facilities were developed in areas of ancient encampments. These encampments need to be protected and deserve to be interpreted.

Many years of overuse is also a consideration when looking at the current condition of campgrounds, picnic areas, group camps, and trail systems. These items also need extensive rehabilitation. The more than 7 miles of roads in the park must also be considered when looking at development and rehabilitation.

Probably most important is the protection and restoration of the natural and cultural resources of the park. This includes resstoring the oak savanna and prairie areas along with a balance of vegetation types that typlifies pre-european settlement times. This also includes finding, documenting, and interpreting the cultural resources of the area.

Lake Bronson is the focus of the state park. This lake has a variety of environmental problems, including major algae blooms in late summer. The dam that maintains this lake is leaking and must be repaired soon.

Important improvements have been completed at Lake Bronson State Park in recent years. However, the goals identified in the ten year old management plan have not been achieved.

RECENT DEVELOPMENT IN LAKE BRONSON STATE PARK

Major development projects over the past few years have included:

1. Lake access improvement
2. Minor Dam Rehabilitation
3. Minor building rehabilitation

Very little development or rehabilitation has occurred due to budget shortages. The rehabilitation of the campground electric system is currently being engineered and should be installed the summer of 1989.

CAPITAL NEEDS IN LAKE BRONSON STATE PARK

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Lake and Beach Rehabilitation - $50,000
Plan and implement projects to reduce lake algae bloom and improve beach water quality.

Oak Savanna and Prairie Restoration - $25,000
Determine best management techniques and take steps to begin to restore oak savanna and prairie communities.

Rehabilitate Use Area Resources - $12,000
Rehabilitate soil, groundcover and trees in the high use areas of the park.

WPA Building Restoration - $150,000
This project includes the restoration of all park buildings and structures. Work will include major exterior and interior improvements to maintain building integrity.

Prairie Management - $2,500
Including burning, planting and seeding native plants to augment existing species diversity.

Seal Old Wells - $3,000
There are several wells in the park that must be correctly sealed to ensure that they do not allow groundwater contamination.

Subtotal $242,500

MAJOR REHABILITATION

Office/Contact Station Remodel - $35,000
This project includes a complete remodel and rehabilitation of the existing office/contact station. Work to include new roof, floor coverings, rearrange office space. This will improve customer service and efficiency.

WPA Beach Building Remodel - $90,000
This project includes the complete rehabilitation of the building including tuck pointing, stone work, utility rehabilitation. and roof repair.

Campground Rehabilitation - $22,000
Project includes camp site rehabilitation, turf management, tables, fire rings, improving drainage, and planting trees.

Campground Water System Rehabilitation - $10,000
Project includes replacement of piping and water fixtures.

Trail System Improvements - $100,000
This project includes major rehabilitation of the entire park summer and winter trail system. This will include grading, bridge replacement, erosion control and gravel surfacing where necessary.

Subtotal $257,000

NEW DEVELOPMENT

Fish Cleaning Station - $15,000
Construction of a new fish cleaning facility. This will include a screened area with water, garbage disposal and cleaning tables.

Outdoor Amphitheater - $25,000
Construct a new outdoor seating area for interpretive programs, with audiovisual projection capability.

Visitors Center - $900,000
Construct Visitor/Trail Center as a multiple use building to provide the Red River Corridor Area with better interpretive services year 'round as well as a trail shelter for winter.

Dam History Display - $15,000
Design and develop an information display on the history of the dam.

Boundary Posting - $10,000
Newly acquired property boundary needs clearing and posting. The present boundary needs some brushing and erosion work.

Storage Building - $30,000
Construct four-stall storage building at shop area. Needed to store state equipment and supplies.

Subtotal $995,000

Total Development Needs $1,494,500

LAND ACQUISITION

There are approximately 20,000 acres of private land within the boundaries of Minnesota State Parks. Acquisition of these lands is an ongoing process that occurs as parcels become available for purchase and funds are available. Present acquisition costs are averaging about a $1,000 per acre across the state. It would therefore cost about $20,000,000 to acquire all the private land within state parks at present values.

The park map shows the location of private holdings within the park. These properties should be purchased before private development increases within the park's statutory boundary.

The following issues highlight problems associated with private property within state parks.

* Private lands within state parks are being sought out by developers.
* Subdivision for residential use will cause such lands to be too expensive to acquire in the future.
* Land uses such as gravel extraction and clear cut logging adversely impact state parks and adjoining public lands.
* Some private lands limit public use of existing park facilities and lands because of their location.

These issues associated with privately owned lands within state parks threaten existing public investment and limit public use.

PRIVATE LANDS TO BE ACQUIRED IN LAKE BRONSON STATE PARK

Parcel #	Acres
1	20.00
2	21.50
6a	9.00
6b	1.20
9a	2.07
15a	428.29
62	40.00
43-59	16.75 (lots)

Total 548.81 acres.

PARK POTENTIAL

What efforts will the completion of resource management, rehabilitation and new development projects have on Lake Bronson State Park? These projects along with the acquisition of private lands within the park will assure the preservation of these unique resources and facilities for future generations. Active resource management will be required to maintain and regenerate existing vegetation. These will ensure that future visitors will be able to experience the ever-changing prairie and forest communities.

Some improvements will not only increase park use but will greatly increase the quality of the visitors experience. Many of the rehabilitation projects will increase staff efficiency and cut the costs of maintaining facilities.

New facilities will improve customer service while giving the visitor a greater opportunity to learn about Minnesota's natural and cultural resources.

The acquisition of private lands within the park will assure that private and commercial development do not distract from the natural beauty of Lake Bronson State Park.

A stable funding source is essential for effective long term resource management and capital budget planning for the Minnesota State Park system and Lake Bronson State Park.

SUMMARY

Currently, statewide Capital needs for development and acquisition are **$55,000,000.** The mission of the Minnesota State Park System can be achieved by funding support to meet this need over the next several bienniums.

Lake Bronson State Park acquisition costs will be determined by appraisals.

Lake Bronson State Park development needs - **$1,494,500.**

Help us celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Minnesota State Park System in 1991!